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SUBJECT: ANC AND MANDELA MOURN DEATH OF "CHAMPION OF
DEMOCRACY" SENATOR KENNEDY

Summary

¶1. (U) On Wednesday, August 26th, both the African National Congress (ANC) and Nelson Mandela's office issued press releases mourning the death of Senator Edward Kennedy. Each recognized and expressed gratitude for his role in the anti-apartheid movement. Local press ran wire stories concentrating more on the biographical details of his life. These public statements highlight values and aspirations that our two countries share. End Summary.

Press Releases Highlight Kennedy's Contributions

¶2. (U) The ANC remembered Senator Kennedy's visit to South Africa in 1985, noting that he staged an "illegal protest" outside Pollsmoor Prison where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated. They emphasized that Mandela has said he knew at the time that Kennedy was at the gate of the prison and that this fact gave him and his fellow prisoners strength and hope. The ANC credited Kennedy with using his trip and the accompanying press to draw attention to apartheid. The release also acknowledged that it was Kennedy who introduced the Anti-Apartheid act in 1985 imposing economic sanctions on South Africa when it was passed the following year over President Ronald Reagan's veto.

¶3. (U) Nelson Mandela's office mourned the loss of Kennedy as a champion of democracy and civil rights. In a statement, Mandela said, "He made his voice heard in the struggle against apartheid at a time when the freedom struggle was not widely supported in the West. We remain grateful for his role."

Local Press Focus on Kennedy's Life

¶4. (U) While The Star ran an article noting Kennedy's anti-apartheid efforts and quoted a press release from the office of President Jacob Zuma, most other newspapers ran international wire service articles that focused on his long career and his family tragedies. The Star article quoted a Zuma statement calling Kennedy a comrade and friend in the fight for liberation. The Pretoria News and the Sowetan articles instead summarized the late senator's life and career, making no mention of his role in the fight to end apartheid.

Comment

¶5. (U) In a relationship sometimes complicated by mild mistrust and grudges held over from the Cold War era, these public acknowledgments of Kennedy's anti-apartheid efforts serve to underscore values and aspirations that the U.S and South Africa have in common. Post issued a press release and posted it to the mission's web page, Facebook and Twitter pages. To date, post has received approximately 40

condolences celebrating Kennedy's life and remembering his
help in the struggle to end apartheid. End comment.

GIPS